

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 003381

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/01/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [IT](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: ITALIAN VIEWS ON GYMnich ISSUES

REF: A. STATE 182534

[1](#)B. THE HAGUE 2172

[1](#)C. ROME 3285

[1](#)D. STATE 8716

Classified By: Charge Emil Skodon for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Charge, accompanied by PolOff, met with MFA Director General for Multilateral Political Affairs Giampiero Massolo and NATO Office Director Giovanni Brauzzi on September 1 to convey points from Ref A demarche. Italy shares US views on most of the issues that EU Foreign Ministers will discuss at their informal meetings September 3-4, but continues to take a softer approach on Iran and the EU arms embargo against China. Italy also is seeking a greater EU profile in several areas, including Iraq, the war on terrorism, and Sudan. Although not on the Gymnich agenda, Massolo again raised Italian concerns over enlargement of the UN Security Council, and suggested it was time for the Contact Group members to begin discussing options for Kosovo final status among themselves. End summary.

Iraq -- Seeking greater EU role

[1](#)2. (C) Thanking the Charge for his condolences regarding the recent killing of Italian journalist Enzo Baldoni, Massolo noted that the kidnapping and execution happened very rapidly, leaving the Italian government no time to open channels of communication with the kidnappers. Massolo predicted that, although Iraq would not be a dominant feature of the Gymnich, France would insist on some sort of statement on the two kidnapped French journalists.

[1](#)3. (C) Massolo also said that Foreign Minister Frattini will call for increased EU action against terrorism. In Italy's view, the French hostages demonstrate that no country is immune from terrorism, regardless of its national position on Iraq. Frattini will outline a series of steps, including policy guidance for anti-terrorism efforts, intelligence sharing, capacity building, and a more active communications strategy. This strategy will also be presented in an interview with the Foreign Minister that widely-read daily La Repubblica will publish later this week.

[1](#)4. (C) Commenting on Dutch Foreign Minister Bot's recent trip to Baghdad (Ref B), Massolo said Italy sees three possible roles for the EU in Iraq: UN protection, assisting the political and electoral process, and police training. What is currently lacking, he said, is the resolve to move forward -- many EU member states want more EU involvement, but are hesitant because of the security situation.

[1](#)5. (C) Massolo viewed as a "very pragmatic solution" the US proposal for a dual-hatted command for NATO training forces in Iraq and MNF-I. Brauzzi agreed, adding that NATO's July declaration, calling for unity of command with the MNF, allowed for only a very "narrow interpretation."

Afghanistan -- Cautious optimism

[1](#)6. (C) Massolo noted that the first phase of the US-provided airlift of the Italian NRF brigade to Afghanistan is going well, and should be completed by September 9. The October 9 elections will not be a model of transparency and fairness, he commented, but it is important to get the process off to a good start, especially in light of parliamentary elections next year. He was encouraged by registration results and said that international efforts to reach UNAMA's election budget goals are proceeding "reasonably well." While there are many unresolved questions in Afghanistan, overall the situation is better than in Iraq and we must continue our stabilization and capacity-building efforts.

[1](#)7. (C) Charge thanked Italy for its recent disbursement of funds for the Afghan election and asked its assistance to push others to speed disbursements. Regarding PRTs, Massolo acknowledged that the process had been slowed because of supplemental efforts for the elections. He was noncommittal about Italy's future plans regarding a PRT, stating that for now the priority had to be election support.

Iran -- Emphasis on continued engagement

[1](#)8. (C) Massolo's first reaction to Charge's points on the

Ira/IAEA issue was to inquire whether the USG's lobbying efforts to refer the matter to the UNSC were already underway, to which the Charge replied in the affirmative. Italy, he said, maintains its tradition of dialogue and engagement with Iran. While it recognizes Iran's obligations under the NPT, it believes the issue needs to be seen in the larger framework of regional stability, human rights, and terrorism. It is better not to have an unpredictable Iran in the regional scenario, especially because of its importance as a factor of stability -- or instability -- in Iraq.

¶9. (C) The EU3's efforts have shed some light on Iran's nuclear activities, Massolo continued. Pushing harder, he warned, would make Tehran cut loose and go its own way. Italy prefers alternative options such as sanctions and strict access and verification agreements. Even if it is difficult to gauge how effective this approach would be, Italy believes it is worth considering. Massolo cited a planned visit by Secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council Rowani to Europe as a sign that the Iranians are thinking of making some overtures. The Italians reportedly told Rowani not to come if he was going to repeat his usual arguments; on the other hand, if he were ready to make fresh commitments, Italy was ready to listen. This approach, Massolo argued, is the most efficient way to get Iran to abide by its NPT obligations and suspend its enrichment activities.

¶10. (C) Noting that the EU3 will report at the Gymnich on talks with Tehran, Massolo said that Italy had noticed a different of perception amongst the three regarding Iran's openness and availability. Now that the EU3 exercise is near its end, FM Frattini will press the Dutch EU Presidency to put the Iran issue into a "normal" EU framework (at 25 rather than 3). The Charge warned not to let Rowani's European tour become an effort to find fissures within the EU, and noted that real action and verification on the part of the Iranians needs to come first. Massolo agreed that verification is the top priority. He said that the Iranians are playing for time until after the US elections. Europe, meanwhile, is playing the role of placeholder until Iran can have a direct dialogue with the US.

China arms embargo -- Italy won't be the lone hold-out

¶11. (C) According to Massolo, Italy is close to the US position on the China arms embargo; Rome is not pushing to lift the embargo and is pushing for a more effective Code of Conduct. France, he said, is the major force behind the move to lift the embargo, insisting on inserting in the June EU Council declaration "a half sentence" saying the EU would revisit the issue. Massolo noted that in May-June he had the impression that the EU was moving towards a more sympathetic view of China, but that now that impression had changed and the situation was relatively quiet. Summing up, Massolo said, Italy was on the US' side, but "if there's a landslide, we can't stand alone." He warned, however, of the need to handle the issue with care to avoid turning it into a contentious transatlantic topic.

Sudan -- Ready to assist

¶12. (C) Massolo said Italy would consider providing financial and logistical support to Sudan if the African Union mandate is increased, although resources are a tricky issue. Italy also is waiting to see what EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Solana will propose -- Massolo opined that this should be an opportunity for Solana to raise both his profile as the EU's "Foreign Minister" and the EU's presence in Africa.

Turkey and Cyprus -- On the road to EU membership

¶13. (C) Italy is very supportive of setting a date to begin negotiations on Turkey's accession to the EU, according to Massolo, and is "smoothing" the path to acceptance. He was "fairly confident" that Turkey would eventually join the EU, but it wouldn't be easy. Though the French present a problem, he felt there was a growing consensus -- maybe even a majority -- within the EU that a date should be set at the December EU Council. Because Turkey increasingly appears as

a moderate Muslim country, it could be a useful tool for combating problems with Islam in Europe, he opined, something the French should recognize. Commenting on the "ideological barrier" of allowing a Muslim country into the EU, Massolo noted that there are already many Muslims in the EU and that they often play a constructive role -- just look at what's happening with the hostage situation in France, he said.

¶14. (C) Massolo agreed with the Charge on the need to help Turkish Cypriots. Italy is trying to help calm the situation by talking to the Greeks to enlist their support. Meanwhile, he said, the EU should act as if the referendum had been successful and give the Turkish Cypriots the benefits of membership, creating a "snowball" effect that would increase

the momentum toward EU membership. Massolo said he was "pretty confident" that eventually this would happen.

Kosovo -- Wedded to standards before status, but looking ahead

15. (C) Italy is adopting a prudent and realistic attitude in Kosovo. Massolo said preparation and prioritization of standards were important for success -- the Kosovars must know what is expected of them. However, he said that it was time to start thinking about what comes next and to start talking about status -- albeit not publicly, lest the Contact Group lose the support and cooperation of the local population. Massolo envisioned a state of "conditional independence" that could involve a strong international presence -- but no partitions. He said that the Contact Group should work on decentralization and coexistence, and that meeting on the margins of the UNGA presents a good opportunity to take a focused look at the way forward. We have to have a plan, Massolo emphasized, in order not to be taken by surprise, noting that the situation in Kosovo could still explode at any time with "nasty" consequences. He gave Charge a paper on this subject that he had shared with other Contact Group members. He looked forward to discussing Kosovo with A/S Jones on the margins of the UNGA.

Albania -- Troubled waters

16. (C) Touching briefly on the downing of an Italian helicopter in Albania (Ref B), Massolo noted that Rome's bilateral relationship with Tirana is not so pleasant at the moment. Describing the Albanians as very proud and independent people, Massolo said Italy was trying to think of ways to improve the relationship.

UNSC Reform -- Italy suggests means of pacifying Japan

17. (C) Massolo raised the issue of UNSC reform, arguing that since the US has not publicly stated its opposition to new permanent members, "the kids are playing." He argued that if the UN panel concludes that there should be more non-permanent seats, the US should tell Japan "behind closed doors" that this would be a fair outcome for Tokyo, which could be continuously reelected. Massolo's implication was that the US could both satisfy Japan's long-standing request for UNSC membership and fend off Germany's quest for a permanent seat. Italy also advocates rotations on the UNSC within regions. Asia, he suggested, could be split into two regional groups, with Japan serving longer rotations in an East Asia regional group.

BAGHDAD MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

Visit Rome's Classified Website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/rome/index.cf> m

SKODON

NNNN

2004ROME03381 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL